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# Illustrations

Iurii Tynianov

Translated by Ainsley Morse and Philip Redko

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Some notes contain references to other articles by Tynianov, such as "On the Composition of *Eugene Onegin*," "Dostoevsky and Gogol'," "On Khlebnikov," "Interlude," "The Ode as Oratorical Genre," etc. These articles are available in English translation in Yuri Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution: Selected Essays on Literature, Theory and Film*, trans. Ainsley Morse and Philip Redko (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019).

There are three levels of notes to this article: author's notes, editor's notes, and translators' notes. Tynianov's own notes appear with no additional identification. Notes made by Marietta Chudakova, editor of the authoritative 1977 version of the text being translated, are followed by (Chudakova's note). Notes made by the translators, Ainsley Morse and Philip Redko, are followed by (translators' note). In author's and editor's notes, abbreviations for cities have been expanded and translated (for example, M is expanded and translated to Moscow). Titles are given in translation, followed by the transliterated Russian title at first occurrence. Italics and bold print used for emphasis in the original are preserved in the translation. Square brackets are used for the translators' brief in-text clarifications.

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In recent years we have seen a proliferation of *Prachtausgaben*.<sup>1</sup>

The illustrations here are often front and center, yet at the same time they play a subordinate role to the text. It is as if they were called on to elucidate the work, to illuminate the text in some way.

No one can deny that illustrations have a right to exist as independent works of art. Artists are justified in using any subject as a *prompt* for their drawings. But do illustrations really illustrate anything? What exactly is their connection to the text? How do they relate to the work they illustrate?

What concerns me here is not judging drawings on the basis of their artistic merit; I am interested solely in their *illustrative* value. I am justified in making this distinction because when artists publish a book of poetry by Fet or Nekrasov, with the illustrations printed alongside the text, and with titles like *The Poems of Fet Illustrated by Konashevich*,<sup>2</sup> or *The Poems of Nekrasov Illustrated by Kustodiev*,<sup>3</sup> these artists actually emphasize the pictures' relationship to the text, their illustrative function. The picture should be viewed not for its own sake, but as somehow supplementing the written work, enriching it, making it in some way concrete.

Thus, alongside Fet's poem "The Bathing Girl" [Kupal'shchitsa] we are faced with Konashevich's "Bathing Girl." It is all too obvious that Fet's poem did not *prompt* the drawing by Konashevich (taken on its own merits, it is of interest only to students of the artist's work); that the artist has, rather, *interpreted* Fet's poem.

Indeed, it is this very interpretation that is of questionable value.

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<sup>1</sup> Deluxe illustrated editions (Germ.).

<sup>2</sup> A. Fet, *Poems* [Stikhotvoreniia] (Saint Petersburg: Akvilon, 1922) (Chudakova's note).

<sup>3</sup> *Six Poems by Nekrasov Illustrated by Kustodiev* [Shest' stikhotvoreniia Nekrasova s illiustratsiiami Kustodieva] (Peterburg: Akvilon, 1921). On Kustodiev's and Konashevich's illustrations see A.A. Sidorov, *Russian Graphic Art in the Years of Revolution* [Russkaia grafika za gody revoliutsii], 35; reviews are noted in the same book on pages 95-6 (Chudakova's note).

The concreteness of a work of verbal art does not correspond to its concreteness when transposed into a visual medium.

More precisely, the specific concreteness of poetry is diametrically opposed to the concreteness of pictorial art. The more vivid and palpable the poetic language, the less successfully it translates into a pictorial medium. The concreteness of poetic language does not come from some underlying visual image; indeed, this property of language is highly disjointed and vague (T. Meier).<sup>4</sup> Rather, it comes from a unique process by which the *meaning of language is transformed*, making it vivid and new. The most important devices for making words concrete — simile and metaphor — are meaningless in pictorial art.

The most concrete — to the point of illusion — writer of them all, [Nikolai] Gogol', is also the most resistant to being translated into pictorial art. The idea of the enshrined “Gogolian type” imposed on readers of his work (beginning in childhood, for Russian readers) is sheer banality, since all the power of these characters comes from the fact that Gogol' never circumscribes the dynamism of their words, gestures and actions into a single solid form.

We see this even in such “picturesque” scenes as the one where Chichikov pays a visit to Betrishchev:

Bowling with head held respectfully on one side and hands extended like those of a waiter carrying a trayful of teacups, the visitor inclined his whole body forward, and said: “I have deemed it my duty to present myself to your Excellency. I have deemed

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<sup>4</sup> Th. Meyer, *Das Stilgesetz der Poesie* (Leipzig, 1901). Also see references to Meyer's work in Iurii Tynianov, *Problems of Verse Language* [Problema stikhotvornogo iazyka] (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 169 and 185. On Meyer's views see P. Sakulin, “Once More on Images” [Eshche ob obrazakh], in *Athenium* [Atenei] (1924), I-II; L.S. Vygotskii, *Psychology of Art* [Psikhologiya iskusstva], (Moscow, 1968), 68; cf. Vygotskii's own criticism of the theory of images in [his] *Art as Cognition* [Iskusstvo kak poznanie]. In Tynianov's plan for scholarly activities “Opera for the year” [Opera na god] (Central State Archive of Literature and Art [Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva], fond 2224, list 1, item 58), which he composed in 1921 or 1922, his notes for the article on *Eugene Onegin* (see the notes to his “On the Composition of *Eugene Onegin*” [O kompozitsii “Evgeniia Onegina”] in Iurii Tynianov, *Poetics. History of Literature. Film*, ed. Marietta Chudakova (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 415-20) include the following point: “Lessing's formula and Th. Meyer's formula.” Evidently Tynianov was planning a polemic with the theory of visible imagery that would be more detailed than the one in *Problems of Verse Language* (Chudakova's note).

it my duty because in my heart I cherish a most profound respect for the valiant men who, on the field of battle, have proved the saviors of their country.”<sup>5</sup>

Here, all the comic power and vividness of Chichikov’s gesture lies, firstly, in the reference to the tea tray, as well as in the relationship between the gesture and Chichikov’s speech, with that rounded oratorical period which subordinates language to rhythm, and itself acts as a sort of verbal gesture.

The reference to the tea tray is not concrete in a pictorial sense; rather, it shifts the action to an entirely different series<sup>6</sup> (with its “whiff of obsequiousness”). The fusion of Chichikov’s gesture and speech is what makes the scene concrete. Subtract the tea tray from the picture, subtract Chichikov’s oratorical devices (as you inevitably will if you translate this into a pictorial medium), and you’re left with a substitution: [Gogol’s] elusive verbal concreteness has been swapped out for the accommodating, foolproof “concretization” of a drawing.<sup>7</sup>

This is why, when Rozanov considers “why the monument to Gogol’ is a failure,” he speaks of the impossibility of embodying his characters (in sculpture):

There is nothing easier than giving a lecture on Gogol’ and illustrating it marvelously with passages from his works. As language, it comes out gorgeous, magnificent. But what about sculpture? Just you try to sculpt a Pliushkin or a Sobakevich. On the page, it’s wonderful, but in bronze, it’s hideous, because sculpture is body, sculpture is form; it obeys all the laws of the perceptible and tangible (*Among Artists* [Sredi khudozhnikov], Saint Petersburg, 1914, p. 279).

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<sup>5</sup> Nikolai Gogol, *Dead Souls*, trans. D.J. Hogarth (Durham, NC: Duke Classics, 2012), 472. In Gogol’s *Dead Souls* [Mertvye dushi] (first volume published in 1842) the protagonist, Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov, newly arrived in a provincial capital, visits a series of local landowners and attempts to hustle them into a get-rich-quick scheme. The encounter with General Betrishchev takes place in the second volume, most of which was destroyed by the author (translators’ note).

<sup>6</sup> The notion of “series” [riad] is central to Tynianov’s thought: a partly visual, partly mathematical metaphor, it expresses the notion of various spheres of cultural, social, economic, and political activity (“the historical series,” “the literary series”) existing in parallel states of evolution and frequently intersecting / interacting (translators’ note).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. [Tynianov] on the verbal and material masks of Gogol’s characters in “Dostoevskii and Gogol” [Dostoevskii i Gogol’] (Chudakova’s note).

Now consider that we have had pictorial “Gogolian types” forced on us since childhood. Just think how badly they have obscured and distorted Gogol’s actual characters.

In fact, half of Russian readers are familiar not with Gogol’ himself, but with Boklevskii, or, at best, Agin.<sup>8</sup>

In “Nevsky Prospect” [Nevskii Prospekt] Gogol’ depicts a crowd using purely verbal devices: “Here you meet unique whiskers, drooping with extraordinary and amazing elegance below the necktie [...] marvelous mustaches [...] waists of a slim delicacy beyond dreams of elegance.”<sup>9</sup> “One displays a smart overcoat with the best beaver on it, the second — a lovely Greek nose, the third — superb whiskers, the fourth — a pair of pretty eyes and a marvelous hat, the fifth — a signet ring on a jaunty forefinger, the sixth — a foot in a bewitching shoe, the seventh — a necktie that excites wonder, and the eighth — a moustache that reduces one to stupefaction” (ibid., 211). These verbal *focal points* — whiskers, mustaches — which are so vivid in language would, if they were translated into a pictorial medium, merely give us body parts severed from their owners.

The dandified frock coat, Greek nose, little foot and hat, jumbled together and made equivalent through the use of the same syntactical construction (sound correspondences emphasize this further), are concrete only in a verbal sense. Enumerated one after another, building in intensity, the details lose their thing-like

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<sup>8</sup> Against Gogol’s wishes, E.E. Bernardskii published Agin’s illustrations for *Dead Souls* without the text, in separate editions. In 1892 D.D. Fedorov published these illustrations as a free-standing album entitled *100 Drawings from Gogol’s Poem Dead Souls* [Sto risunkov k poeme Gogolia “Mertvye dushi”]. The book sold very well and was subsequently republished many times, increasing the influence of the drawings on readers’ reception of the work, as Tynianov writes. In the 1910s two books by K. Kuz’minskii appeared: *The Illustrator P.M. Boklevskii, His Life and Work* [Khudozhnik-illustrator P.M. Boklevskii, ego zhizn’ i tvorchestvo] (Moscow, 1910) and *A. Agin, His Life and Work* [A. Agin. Ego zhizn’ i tvorchestvo] (Moscow, 1913). Cf. Korolenko’s statement in a letter to Kuz’minskii, which the latter reproduces in his book on Boklevskii: “I can no longer imagine Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov in any other form than the one given by Boklevskii.” A.A. Sidorov noted Agin’s popularity in the early 1920s (*Russian Graphic Art in the Years of Revolution*, 35). Konashevich’s drawings for Turgenev’s “Landowner” [Pomeshchik] were compared to Agin’s illustrations to *Dead Souls* (Chudakova’s note).

<sup>9</sup> *The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, vol. 1, trans. Constance Garnett, edited by Leonard Kent (Chicago, 1964), 210 (translators’ note).

concreteness, and replace it with a new kind of concreteness, one that is cumulative, *verbal*.

There are all sorts of ways one could illustrate “Nevsky Prospect,” but if the artist follows Gogol' closely, he will produce a caricature of the text; and if he takes a different approach altogether, he will produce a different kind of concreteness, one that will push aside and obscure Gogol's verbal concreteness.

The prospect of illustrating “The Nose” [Nos] is tantalizing, but impossible — but not because of the difficulty of fusing the grotesque and the everyday in pictorial art. It is impossible because everything in “The Nose” hinges purely on language: Major Kovalev's *nose*, which gets baked into a loaf of bread, is identified with, and substituted by, the elusive *Nose*, who gets into a coach and attempts to flee to Riga.<sup>10</sup> This *Nose* is apprehended by a police officer and returned to the *nose's* owner wrapped in a piece of cloth. Any illustration is doomed to spoil this play; any pictorial concretization of the *Nose* will make its effortless substitution with a *nose* entirely nonsensical.<sup>11</sup>

The same can be said of Leskov's concreteness. Leskov is one of the most vivid writers in Russian.<sup>12</sup> In his hands, Russian *speech*, with its enormous diversity of intonations and sly folk etymology, becomes a kind of illusory protagonist. We sense the gestures behind the speech, and behind the gestures we sense a kind of face, almost tangible. But this tangibility is elusive. It is concentrated in the articulation of speech, in

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<sup>10</sup> In Gogol's short story, “The Nose” (first published in 1836), a mid-level civil servant (Major Kovalev) wakes up one morning to find his nose has gone missing. Kovalev's nose makes appearances throughout the story, sometimes as a normal-sized, inanimate nose (e.g., when it somehow gets baked into a loaf of bread, or when it is finally returned to its owner), other times as an apparently human-like character wearing the uniform of a high-ranking official. This discrepancy —like the other fantastical elements of the story —is never explained (translators' note).

<sup>11</sup> Compare *Problems of Verse Language* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 173, note 3. We note editions of “The Nose” with illustrations by V. Lebedev (Peterburg: Lit.-izd. otd. NKP, 1919), A. Rybnikov (Moscow: Svetlana, 1921), V. Masiutin (Moscow/Berlin: Gelikon, 1922). Compare the earlier illustrations by D. Kardovskii in the luxury edition of “Nevsky Prospect” [Nevskii Prospekt] (Saint Petersburg: Kruzhok liubitelei russkikh iziashchnykh izdani, 1905). Compare A.A. Sidorov, *Russian Graphic Art at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* [Russkaia grafika nachala XX veka] (Moscow, 1969, 109) (Chudakova's note).

<sup>12</sup> To the Russian Formalists, Leskov's writings —along with Gogol's —exemplified the concept of *skaz* — distinctive orientation toward oral speech rather than literary language (translators' note).

the curve of the lips; and when we try to catch this character, the character slips away. And it stands to reason: Leskov's comically palpable language, in the process of turning into an acoustic gesture and thus hinting at a flesh-and-blood speaker, seems to turn into this speaker, to take his place. Language alone is entirely sufficient for concretizing the character, and the "visible" character dissolves. (This accounts for the enormous significance of characters' *first and last names*.)

Here the crucial factor is the indeterminacy, the wide borders of this concreteness. In translating a *face* into the medium of *sound*, Khlebnikov achieved remarkable concreteness:<sup>13</sup>

Bo-beh-óh-bee is the song of lips	<i>Bobeobi pelis' guby,</i>
Veh-eh-óh-mee is the song of eyes	<i>Veeomi pelis' vzory</i>

Here, the *lips* are immediately palpable, in the most immediate sense.

Here, in the alternation of *labial b's*, *rounded o's*, and neutral *eh's* and *ee's*, we get a real picture of lips in motion. Here, the *organ* is named, brought into linguistic being by reproducing the working of that organ.

The strained articulation of **veh-eh-oh** in the second line is an acoustic metaphor; it, too, is palpable to an illusory extent.

But right after that, Khlebnikov adds:

Thus on the canvas of <i>certain</i> correspondences	<i>Tak na kholste kakikh-to sootvetstvii</i>
Beyond extension lived a Face.	<i>Vne protiazheniia zhilo Litso.</i>

Everything here hinges on that "certain"; the very broadness and indeterminacy of the metaphor enables it to be concrete "beyond extension."

Leskov says of his Sheramur:

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<sup>13</sup> Velimir [Viktor] Khlebnikov was a leading poet and theorist of the pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde and one of the inventors of *zaum*, an abstract sound-language. Tynianov wrote extensively on Khlebnikov; see in particular "On Khlebnikov" and "Interlude," in Yuri Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution: Selected Essays on Literature, Theory and Film*, trans. Ainsley Morse and Philip Redko (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019) (translators' note).

[He's] something gypsies dropped by the wayside; some sort of rubbed-out spot, the features of its stamp worn away. A poor, miserable, exhausted sort of thing, nothing to do but poke it with a spindle and toss it out...What is it? Or is it really just a much-too-cleverly designed "picture puzzle"? [...] Curious people find it the most intriguing and agonizing [...] They turn it every which way, hoping that a lucky turn will reveal what is hidden in the hieroglyph. But they can't figure it out, and they never will, because there's nothing there, because it is just a blot and nothing more.<sup>14 15</sup>

Sheramur's concreteness comes out of the combination of his disjointed speech and this mysterious "blot." Any attempt to use the pictorial details Leskov gives us about Sheramur's appearance, and to compile them into a picture, would oversimplify and oversolidify this combination.

Just as Gogol concretizes purely verbal constructions to the limits of comic visibility ("Nevsky Prospect"), in Leskov an entire plot often grows from a single pun ("The Darner" [Shtopal'shchik]). Just as a pun is destroyed if we explain it, translate it into everyday reality, a drawing cannot but destroy the linchpin of a story.

And yet the inclination to illustrate makes perfect sense: the specific concreteness of verbal art seems to be concreteness *per se*. The more concrete a poetic work, the more powerful this conviction, and only the results of attempts to translate the specific concreteness of one art form into the (no less specific!) concreteness of another reveal its tenuous foundations.

Sensing the concreteness of the characters in [his *Eugene*] *Onegin*, [Aleksandr] Pushkin wanted to see drawings of them.<sup>16</sup> The engravings done for the *Neva Almanac*

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<sup>14</sup> N.S. Leskov, *Collected Works* [Sobranie sochinenii], vol. 6 (1957), 287-88. The examples from Leskov are polemically directed against the illustrated editions of "The Darner" [Shtopal'shchik], illustrated by Kustodiev, and "The Toupee Artist" [Tupeinyi khudozhnik], illustrated by Dobuzhinskii, both published in Saint Petersburg by Akvilon in 1922. Cf. E. Gollerbach on the interrelation between Dobuzhinskii's illustrations and Leskov's text in *M. Dobuzhinskii's Drawings* [Risunki M. Dobuzhinskogo] (Moscow/Petrograd, 1923), 79 (Chudakova's note).

<sup>15</sup> Sheramur is the eponymous protagonist of Leskov's 1879 story "Sheramur" [Sheramur] (translator's note).

<sup>16</sup> Letter to L.S. Pushkin, 1-10 November 1824 (*The Complete Collected Works of Pushkin* [Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Pushkina] [Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1937-1949], vol. XII, 119) (Chudakova's note).

[Nevskii almanakh] were no better or worse than any others, but they provoked Pushkin to write epigrams that even now are still printed with bashful ellipses. What appeared comical was meanwhile the *solidification*, the detailed explication of an image that in words had been feather-light. We can see this in certain physical details in the epigrams:

Leaning <zadom (his rear end)> against the granite<sup>17</sup>

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Nipple showing dark through shirt.<sup>18</sup>

Instead of the vacillating emotional profile of the protagonist, instead of the *dynamic concreteness* made manifest in the protagonist's complex *aggregate image*, Pushkin was faced with a kind of other, false concreteness; instead of the subtle "face of the author," a solid "rear end" appears — hence the comic quality of the drawings. It comes as no surprise that Pushkin would later be quite cautious with regard to illustrations, asking Pletnev to take care to include only "meaningless" vignettes.<sup>19 20</sup> It

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<sup>17</sup> An inexact citation of one of Pushkin's 1829 epigrams mocking the *Neva Almanac* illustrations to his novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*. These epigrams were first published in the 1859 issue of Alexander Herzen's almanac *Polar Star* [Poliarnaia zvezda]. This particular epigram accompanies an illustration of Pushkin himself with his character Eugene Onegin. Censorship in Pushkin's time would have replaced the offending word with what Tynianov calls "bashful ellipses"; here, the word is probably not "rear end" [zadom] as Tynianov writes, but "ass" [zhopoi] (translators' note).

<sup>18</sup> As in Note 17, an inexact citation of one of Pushkin's 1829 epigrams. This particular epigram accompanies an illustration of a nearly nude Tatiana, the heroine of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Here, too, brackets indicate a censored word: "Bellybutton seen through shirt/<Tit> spilling out — a lovely sight!" [Pupok cherneet skvoz' rubashku/Naruzhu <tit'ka> — milyi vid!] (translators' note).

<sup>19</sup> Pushkin's own drawings in his manuscripts were either just drawings in general terms (of a coffin-maker, a funeral, but not illustrating a particular story), or they were drawings *apropos* (a steed with no Bronze Horseman), but for the most part just sweeps of the pen that went well with the kinetic imagery of the verse (and often for this reason had no external relationship to them). In the latter example we are faced with a phenomenon rather like that of automatic cryptography. Cf.:

My *straying* pen no longer traces  
Beneath a verse left incomplete  
The shapes of ladies' heads and feet.

*Pero, zabyvshis', ne risuet*  
*Bliz nedokonchennykh stikhov*  
*Ni zhenskikh nozhek, ni golov.*

In all of these cases we are clearly not talking about any kind of illustrative quality. [Translator's note: the translation used in this snippet of verse from *Eugene Onegin* is by James Falen (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 31.]

<sup>20</sup> Inexact citation from a letter to Pletnev, 11 October 1835 (*The Complete Collected Works of Pushkin* [Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1937-1949], vol. XVI, 56) (Chudakova's note).

would seem that this holds true not only for the relationship between word and pictorial art, but also word and music.

As it turns out, the most motivated series here — program music — cannot always be illustrated by words. Chaikovskii wrote to Taneev about the Fourth Symphony: “My symphony is, of course, a program piece, but it is entirely impossible to formulate its program in words; this would elicit laughter and seem comical.”<sup>21</sup> Again, the translation to a different medium is connected with a sense of the comical.

What can then be said about the forms of verbal art in which the specific expressiveness of the given art form is so condensed that there is simply nothing there to prompt translation into another art form? Can the poems of Fet be illustrated — poems which seemed so meaningless to his contemporaries that they could not be surpassed by all the Konrad Lilienschwager parodies.<sup>22</sup> As Fet himself testified:

What was said in them — I don't know  
And I don't need it.

*Chto skazalos' v nikh — ne znaiu,  
I ne nuzhno mne.*

As if one could draw a picture of how

In late summer the bedroom window  
Hears the quiet whisper of a sorrowing leaf  
As it whispers not words;

*Pozdnim letom v okna spal'noi  
Tikho shepchet list pechal'nyi,  
Shepchet ne slova*<sup>23</sup>

And in all of Fet's poems, even the ones where you can almost grasp a figurative “visual quality” (“The Bather”), the authentically new Fet phenomenon, his *art*, came of course neither from the theme nor the object at all, but from the verse object.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century was more cautious, at least in its intentions.

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<sup>21</sup> M. Chaikovskii, *The Letters of P.I. Chaikovskii and S.I. Taneev* [Pis'ma P.I. Chaikovskogo i S.I. Taneeva] (Moscow [1916], 29).

<sup>22</sup> Between 1859-1861 N. A. Dobroliubov used this pseudonym to publish his parodies in the satire section of *The Contemporary* [Sovremennik] and *The Spark* [Iskra] (Chudakova's note).

<sup>23</sup> From the 1858 poem “No, expect no passionate songs” [Net, ne zhdi ty pesni strastnoi] (Chudakova's note).

A. N. Olenin was faced with the task of illustrating Derzhavin, which seemed tantalizingly simple: this was after all the “painter-poet,” whose “[images of] painterly beauty” were, apparently, easy to transfer into drawing. Olenin preferred a different path. In his “The Meaning of Sketches” [Znachenie chertezhei] he laid out a short programmatic plan for his drawings for the publication:

The artist [...] does not repeat the author and the former does not present the same thing [figuratively] that the latter wrote in verses. This kind of repetition, which is fairly common, seemed to the artist to be a pleonasm: this is why the artist attempted to finish saying with his pencil that which the poet *could not* or *did not wish* to say in words [...] and without this, perhaps, how quickly we would be bored by those depictions which repeat for the eyes the same thing that the imagination had long since presented to the mind, and more successfully conveyed conceptually through verse. The reader might regret the artist’s futile labors, had he gone to great lengths to depict Minerva, Cupid et al. because Minerva and Cupid are named in the poem, and have dutifully showed up here [in the picture], but the artist couldn’t paint them *in absentia*.

Yet the illustrative vignettes introducing some long poems have the same or nearly the same thing depicted figuratively as is described in the poem. But this is preferable to an allegorical [inoskazatel’nomu] depiction only when reality presents a picture for the eyes as good as the verbal brush can present to the mind, and the artist only out of love for his art could not refrain from sketching this picture, where logical meaning grouped these physical human figures together in harmony and eloquence and brought them to life through juxtaposition. The artist sought, meanwhile, to whatever extent possible, to avoid these pictures, leaving all the action to the poems and considering his pencil to be the ultimate aid to poetic strength.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that depicting some other thing in a way different from poetry (*ino-skazat’* [literally “other-saying”]) can only be accomplished in a *roundabout way* [inoskazaniem]

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<sup>24</sup> G.R. Derzhavin, *Works, with notes by Ia. Grot. Volume 1* [Sochineniia. S ob’iasnitel’nymi primechaniiami Ia. Grota. Tom pervyi] (Saint Petersburg, 1864), XXX-I.\*

\* The note cited belongs, evidently, not to Olenin but rather to N.A. L’vov: see E.Ia. Dan’ko, “Visual Art in Derzhavin’s Poetry” [Izobrazitel’noe iskusstvo v poezii Derzhavina], in the collection *The 18<sup>th</sup> Century, 2* [XVIII vek, 2] (Moscow/Leningrad, 1940), 227. Compare [Tynianov’s] interpretation of Merzliakov’s critical analysis of Derzhavin’s poetry in “The Ode as Oratorical Genre” [Oda kak oratorskii zhanr] in *Poetics. History of Literature. Film*, ed Marietta Chudakova (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 246. See I.Z. Serman, “The Problem of Speaking Pictorial Art in Derzhavin’s Poetry” [Problema govoriashchei zhivopisi v poezii Derzhavina] in *Artistic Culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Conference Materials (1973)* [Khudozhestvennaia kul’tura XVIII veka. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii (1973)] (Moscow, 1974) (Chudakova’s note).

(allegorically), that this allegory “supplements” something, is not the most interesting thing here.<sup>25</sup> Rather, the valuable understanding here is of the fundamental difference between the tasks of both kinds of artist, the freedom of visual art vis-à-vis poetry and its rare tactfulness toward it; the task of the drawings in relation to poetry is more negative than positive: *to leave all the action to the poems.*

The specific concreteness of the poetic work should not be hidden; a book that is a *poetic work* more likely lines up with the Futurist principle of “read it and tear it up” than with the heavyweight, “literary” *book*.<sup>26</sup>

There are two possible situations that allow for the legitimate cohabitation of drawings and words. Only when not illustrating anything, not making connections between the word and picture that are forced and *figural*, can a drawing frame a text. But it should be subordinate to a visual principle that is constructively analogous to the principle of the given poetic work. Thus Pushkin requested that there be no “Oriental color or excesses” in the head ornaments and tailpieces [to his books].<sup>27</sup>

The second case in which drawings can play a more independent role, but now in relation to the *verbal medium*, is when graphic elements are used as elements of expression in verbal art. Poetry operates not only and not really through the *word* so much as through *expression*. The concept of expression includes all the *equivalents* of the word; such equivalents can be gaps in the text (recall the enormous role played by skipped lines in *Eugene Onegin*), and they can be graphic elements. Word equivalents

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<sup>25</sup> Polemics with A.A. Sidorov. See *Print and Revolution* [Pechat' i revoliutsiia], no. 2 (1922), 231 (Chudakova's note).

<sup>26</sup> This opposition was common at this time. “In 1900 A. Vollar, the well-known patron of artists and writers, began to publish extremely high-quality books (republications of classical authors and nineteenth-century poets). Expensive and intended for book-lovers all over the world, these bibliophilic editions are just as characteristic of the early twentieth century as are the aesthetically sharply contrasting publications of the Futurists, Dadaists and Weimar-era Bauhaus (the latter featuring Soviet artist El Lissitzky and Hungarian M. Nagy) — publications that appeared after the First World War and the Russian revolution.” A. Sidorov, *Art of the Book* [Iskusstvo knigi], UNESCO Courier (Dec. 1972), 33 (Chudakova's note).

<sup>27</sup> Inexact citation from a letter to L.S. Pushkin and P.A. Pletnev (March 15, 1825), *The Complete Collected Works of Pushkin* (Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1937-1949), vol. XIII, 154 (Chudakova's note).

include Rabelais's bottle, Sterne's drawing of a dotted line, the chapter titles in Immerman's *Baron Munchhausen*. Their role is special, but only in the *verbal medium*; they are word equivalents in the sense that, surrounded by verbal masses, they themselves bear certain verbal functions (as, in a sense, graphic "words").

Both of these cases of "legitimate visual elements" fall outside illustration.

One of the objections that could be made is the following: what about illustrations made by poets themselves? Do not Hoffmann's drawings that accompany his *Notes of a Travelling Enthusiast* point to the close tie between the two conceptions?<sup>28</sup> And have we ourselves not lived through a period of convergence of art forms: Čiurlionis's "sonatas," Blok's verbal-musical constructions? And no one would call these convergences fruitless, even if now once again we live in a time of individuation.

Art forms, evidently, move along the path of these convergences and divergences. They are legitimate and necessary, but not because of the syncretic quality of the creator's psychology: we judge the art itself, not the blurred mass of associations that surrounds it.

But these convergences, these "infusions" from other art forms justify unheard-of transformations in the realm of the *given* art form. The musical principle in verbal and pictorial art gave rise to astonishing discoveries: the unusual deployment of specific material produced unusual forms within the given art form; and this is how syncrisis<sup>29</sup> ends.

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<sup>28</sup> Gogol's drawings for *The Government Inspector* [Revizor] are not really illustrations; they are more like gesticulatory comments on the play. As such they can be taken into account when staging the text.\*

\*Gogol's authorship of the well-known *Government Inspector* drawings has not been confirmed; the drawings were, evidently, taken into account by Meyerhold when he staged *The Government Inspector* (Chudakova's note).

<sup>29</sup> Syncrisis (in Russian, sinkhresis, from Greek synkrinein, "to combine") is a rhetorical figure in which contraries or opposites are compared (translators' note).

Thus descriptive poetry and allegorical painting ended with Lessing's revolution. Thus in our day the Symbolists' syncretism paved the way for the self-sufficient word [samovitoe slovo] of the Futurists.<sup>30</sup>

But in these cases what is crucially important to us is not the moment of introduction, but the moment of combining; not even the result as a combination or conjoining, but the result as such. Any work that claims to be an illustration of another will be a distortion and a narrowing of it. Even a poet's drawings illustrating his own works impose a unreliable interpretation on them, just as this sort of interpretation occurs in literary commentary on a drawing.<sup>31</sup>

Some might also object that there are *plot-heavy* [siuzhetnye] works in which the word is effaced, where the essence lies in the plot dynamics, and that works like these have little to lose from illustrations. However, it only seems so.

The problem is that *story* [fabula] is one thing and *plot* [siuzhet] is another. The story is a static chain of relations, connections, objects, abstracted from the verbal dynamics of the work. The plot is these same connections and relations within verbal dynamics. When we extract a detail from a work (to make an illustration), we are extracting a *story* detail, but we cannot do anything in the illustration to emphasize its significance to the plot. Let us clarify this. Imagine a detail: "the hero is being chased." The story-significance of the detail is clear — it's "such-and-such" in the chain of relations

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<sup>30</sup> These remarks on the convergences and divergences between literature and the other arts can serve as an addendum to the theory of literary evolution. As in his articles "Literary Fact" and "On Literary Evolution", Tynianov does not draw on material from classical or medieval art. But here, unlike in those articles, he considers contemporary artistic practices and theories to a lesser extent: Tynianov proceeds from the fact that in European culture of the previous decades the differentiation of the arts was a more dominant factor than syncretic tendencies — and thus he leaves aside Futurist experiments with the interaction of poetry and visual art. Cf. works by [Mikhail] Larionov and [Natalia] Goncharova, who created a "new type of poetic book — one entirely lithographic, with text written [out] by the author or artist ('self-writing' [samopis'mo]). Books with lithographic authorial handwriting allowed for an especially tight embedding of illustration into the text." N. Khardzhiev, "In Memory of Natalia Goncharova (1881-1962) and Mikhail Larionov (1881-1964)" [Pamiati Natalii Goncharovoi (1881-1962) i Mikhaila Larionova (1881-1964)], *Art of the Book*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1968), 310 (Chudakova's note).

<sup>31</sup> This unreliable quality can be most easily traced through the "illustrations" of L. Andreev (to his own work) — and with greater difficulty in the drawings of experienced draftsmen (like Hoffmann).

among the characters. But its plot significance is not at all that simple: this detail might occupy first one, then another position in the deployment of the plot [razvertyvanie siuzheta] (Vikt. Shklovskii's term), depending on the *literary time* allotted to it, and on the degree of its stylistic accentuation. Illustrations give details of the story — never of the plot. They separate the detail from the dynamics of the plot. They overburden the plot with story.

We are living in a time of the differentiation of activities. Illustrating Chopin through dance and Fet through drawings hampers Chopin and Fet, while also hampering dance and visual art.<sup>32</sup>

An illustrated book is a bad educational tool. The more lavish, the more pretentious, the worse it is.

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<sup>32</sup> Tynianov evidently has in mind the Isadora Duncan school of dance (Chudakova's note).